WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 8, NO. 9 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | JANUARY 1998

"Throw away abstraction and the academic learning, the rules, the map and compass. Feel your way without blinders. To touch more people, the personal realities and the social must be evoked -- not through rhetoric but through blood and pus and sweat." Gloria Anzaldúa

Pro-Affirmative Action Activists Are Here to Stay!

Wendy C. Ortiz

NO!200 has been busy defending affirmative action during the last half of 1997. More work is in store for 1998.

Some of the highlights of local NO!200 organizing:

- Open meetings that brought together community members, activists, and Evergreen students to forge alliances against I-200.
- The screening of the popular film "Follow Me Home" by director Peter Bratt to garner support for NO!200, which included audience post-film discussion about issues such as racism, white guilt, and community activism.
- An affirmative action educational panel featuring Anna Schlect, Buddy Villanueva, and myself that was taped and aired on TCTV throughout the month of December.
- A panel discussion on affirmative action sponsored by Thurston County NOW.
- An organizing training facilitated by Patrick Hogan, founder of the highly successful Decline to Sign effort that stopped the anti-gay initiatives in the early 1990s. This training was attended by concerned individuals that came from as far away as Tacoma, culminating in a spontaneous signature intervention action at the Tumwater Costco.
- Anarchic energy by Evergreen students and others as they held signs urging drivers in Olympia to "decline to sign I-200" and support affirmative action.
- Letters to the Editor of the Daily 0 and their Lead Editorial exposing the true intent of I-200 to repeal affirmative action.
- An upcoming affirmative action discussion to be aired on TCTV also featuring Anna Schlect.
- A discussion with Clint Burelson, host of the KAOS show "Free and Fair on the Air," about affirmative action and NO!200.
- The various discussions and debates about this issue among people in the street and in their home about this issue.

As the media pandered to the proponents of the deceptive I-200, stories were also unearthed regarding the practices of the I-200 campaign. It was reported that name-gatherers were being flown in from as far away as the Midwest to gather signatures, and they themselves were deceived by the intent of I-200. One man claimed he was told this was a pro-affirmative action initiative; he was also promised travel, room and board, meal stipends, all of which he did not receive. Wanna talk about quotas? The I-200 campaign only paid their name-gatherers if they met a quota of 150 to 200 signatures a day. Wanna talk about 'preferences'? The I-200 campaign has sought students on community college campuses and people of color to gather signatures in an attempt to sway people's decision: if a black person approaches you and says 'sign this to end discrimination in the workplace,' it must be a good thing. WRONG!

I had the pleasure of talking to a woman on the phone who called after the affirmative action segment of "Free and Fair on the Air." She told me she was indeed approached by "a black man" who made that very statement and asked for her signature. She signed it. She expressed a feeling of having been deceived. I dropped a couple of postcards in the mail to her that she could send to the Secretary of State to strike her name from the petition. She will probably engage her friends and family in a discussion of this issue, and this is what sparks grassroots activism.

As I type this, I feel I'm in a precarious position. Will I-200 gather the signatures needed to pass the repeal of affirmative action? Only the tally on January 2 will tell. If these signatures have been gathered, will legislators pass it unanimously? Governor Gary Locke, who opposes I-200, will not be able to veto it. The initiative may be passed into law without a vote.

Or will January 2 find the backers of I-200 without the appropriate amount of signatures? This will be cause for celebration, but not for long: the work that they put into attempting to take this state back to pre-civil rights legislation will probably be channeled into getting attention for the amount of signatures they did get. Our celebration, if we are so fortunate, should be short-lived, because affirmative action is still, and will be, a hot issue while this country experiences the convulsions of racism, sexism, downsizing, and economic globalization. Sound too broad? It's all interconnected.

It is still crucial for people to learn the facts about affirmative action, and counter the arguments. If affirmative action exists, we must still have the conversations, help to educate and inform, and look for ways to further implement a policy that has been bashed by even liberals and progressives because it hasn't done what it is meant to do. Do we throw it away because it didn't work? Why is it so easy to throw away policies such as welfare and affirmative action, while impossible to do away with the defense budget?

Houston, Texas maintained affirmative action policy when they educated the public about a similarly misleading initiative on the ballot that would have banned affirmative action. Fifty-five percent voted no on the repeal of affirmative action. In California, while Prop. 209 dismantled affirmative action, there is a growing movement behind "the California Equality Initiative," proposed by Ron Takaki, who has "quit reacting to the assault on affirmative action" and decided "to become proactive." This proposed amendment to the California Constitution will re-open the discussion about the underlying issues of affirmative action, such as the concept of merit, the myth of the level playing field, and the misrepresentation of terms such as "preference" and "quotas." A similar possibility for pro-civil rights people in this state should I-200 pass? You better believe it. Pro-affirmative action-minded individuals and activists are here to stay!

It is still crucial for people to learn the facts about affirmative action, and counter the arguments. If affirmative action exists, we must still have the conversations, help to educate and inform, and look for ways to further implement a policy that has been bashed by even liberals and progressives because it hasn't done what it is meant to do.

Critical Mass: The Movie!

WIP News Service

Olympia, consider yourself forewarned.

Listen up all bicyclists, skateboarders, pedestrian activists, and other alternately-powered non-automobilists: Critical Mass '98 is upon us. We are looking to make the next two Masses the biggest ever--why? Because we're putting it on video, film, and audio, that's why! A group of filmmakers and CM riders in Portland, Oregon have contacted us about putting together a film documenting Critical Mass around the world. That's right--the world. We are tired of podunk criticisms from entities such as the Olympian that are like so much slaps on the wrist to bicyclists weary of dangerous riding conditions in our city streets and the environmental destruction due to a car-based society. Critical Mass is happening all over the globe and is not usually given high commendation. It's not a safe, shiny, happy riding club. It's not a race. It's a radical action that displaces automobiles and brings to focus the fossil-fuel dependency that gives rise to motorist arrogance and road rage.

What is Critical Mass? In the words of a participant, CM is "a monthly organized coincidence." Of course it doesn't rival the (at least) twice daily critical mass (called rush hour) performed and organized by motorists everyday. Ours is a time and place where bicyclists can ride together without the usual fear of 2 tons of steel breathing down our necks. Critical Mass, as described by another Mass-eur, represents life without automobiles. Critical Mass is about taking an active role in staking a claim on bicyclist rights. It is also about taking an active role in alerting people to the ecological devastation cars put out as well as the inevitable jams of an ever-expanding car based society.

The industry estimates that motorists spend from 25% to 50% or even more of their income on their cars -- drive to work, work to drive. Let's face it: there are cars in every city living better than people.

The industry estimates that motorists spend from 25% to 50% or even more of their income on their cars -- drive to work, work to drive. Let's face it: there are cars in every city living better than people.

As western culture encroached upon this land and decimated the natural predators that made everyday travel a danger, we recreated them in our own image. And with that pedestrians, bicyclists, all other animals still in existence and even other cars are the daily targets of carelessness, rage, hate, and stupidity. One in 60 people nationally are involved in some sort of automobile "accident" every year. In Washington, 85 pedestrians are killed and

(Continued page 8)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Correspondence, articles, art, and photographs are always welcome. Please, when possible, put articles on a 3.5" IBM-compatible disk (text preferred). Artwork and photos should be camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295, worksinprogress@juno.com, or come by our office and drop it in the "WIP Box" located in the back of the Liberation Cafe.

Back Issues:

A complete set of back issues is located in the library of Liberation Cafe along with a chrono-index.

WIP is also being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Dave Campbell
Frank Hoffman
Teresa Jennings
Jerome Johnson
Evelyn Montague
Wendy Ortiz
Hali Panneton
Tara Perkins
CJ Russo
Marie Smith
Sylvia Smith
Pat Tassoni
Dave Zink

Mission Statement:

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Governing Tool:

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:

Friday, Jan. 23rd

6pm at Liberation Cafe

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 27th
7 pm at Liberation Cafe

WORKS IN PROGRESS:
PO Box 295 Olympia, WA 98507
(360) 705-2726
worksinprogress@juno.com

Advertising Info

⇨ Tara Perkins at 704-3084

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LETTERS, ETC.

No Use for Abuse Superhealing Weekend

Saturday, January 24
& Sunday, January 25

The purpose of the Coalition for Human Dignity is to raise awareness and consciousness about domestic violence in order to mobilize our communities to take action to protect ourselves, our friends, and our children from violence at home. We intend to give direct material support to people who find it necessary to leave their homes because of domestic violence, who often face poverty and further abuse by society at large. We understand that this issue affects all communities, crossing race and class lines, and see the necessity for a broad-based movement to confront domestic violence.

The No Use for Abuse Weekend is being organized in response to the alarming increase of domestic violence reported on Superbowl Sundays. Day one will consist of workshops on healthy relationships, men's issues, sex and sexual abuse, power issues in relationships, the politics of domestic violence, women's self-defense, and linedancing. The workshops will be followed by a concert featuring Diamonds into Coal and other performers. On Sunday we will have a vigil, speakout, and march in downtown Olympia.

Call Erika at (360) 412-0140 or at PO Box 12801 Olympia, WA 98508.

Community Sustaining Fund

Fall 1997 Grant Recipients

The Community Sustaining Fund of Thurston County is pleased to announce the following groups and individuals were recipients in our 1997 Fall Grant Cycle:

Olympia Political Cultural Center: $250, to rent or purchase videos for TCTV broadcast. These videos concern political/cultural issues and perspectives not normally available from conventional media.

Cross-Cultural Thurston County Youth Project for Environmental Educators: $200, to help fund a student-to-student informational exchange on environmental and sustainability issues. This links students in Thurston County and a rural village in El Salvador.

Northwest International Lesbian Gay Film Festival: $300, to assist the Festival in shifting the focus of their activities from The Evergreen State College to downtown Olympia.

Linda Carpenter: $125, towards researching the possibility of upgrading a fish blocking culvert on Eagle Creek. Eagle Creek is located in an area near Lacey that is slated for extensive development.

Handful of Truth Theater Company: $500, for theater space rental for the teen based theater company. Theatrical works focus on teen life skills and AIDS awareness.

Books to Prisoners Olympia Support Group: $300, for the local purchase of dictionaries to be sent to the many prisoners that request them.

With the completion of the Fall 1997 Grant Cycle, the Community Sustaining Fund has returned $38,382 to our community in the form of awards to local activists since the organization's founding in 1987. Twice a year the Community Sustaining Fund awards money to local groups and individuals engaged in social justice, environmental protection and community building projects. The Community Sustaining Fund tends to award funds for startup cost of projects that might otherwise go unfunded, but with the expectation that these projects will become self-sustaining. Grant funds are derived from contributing individuals and businesses. Special thanks goes to the Olympia Food Co-op for their ongoing support, as well as those co-op shoppers who round up on their purchases. Thanks to everyone for continuing to "roundup" for social change. Activist and community members can look forward to the announcement of our Spring 1998 grant cycle as well as our annual raffle in February. The Community Sustaining Fund is always looking to expand and diversify our board of directors.

WIP Ad Rep Opening

Works In Progress seeks outgoing person to sell advertising for progressive community newspaper. This is a paid position, commission to be negotiated.

For those interested, please contact Wendy at 705-2726 or write to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

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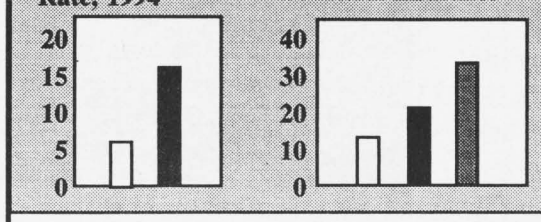
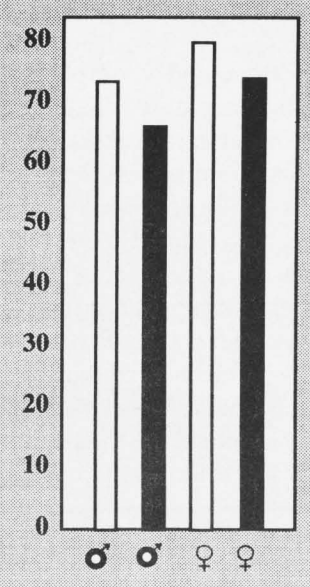
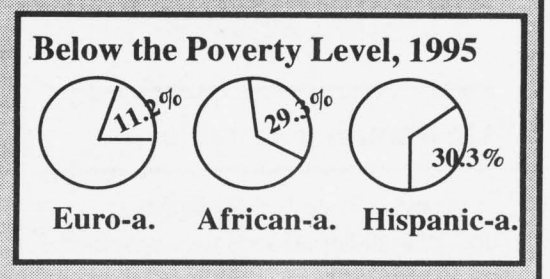
JANUARY 1998

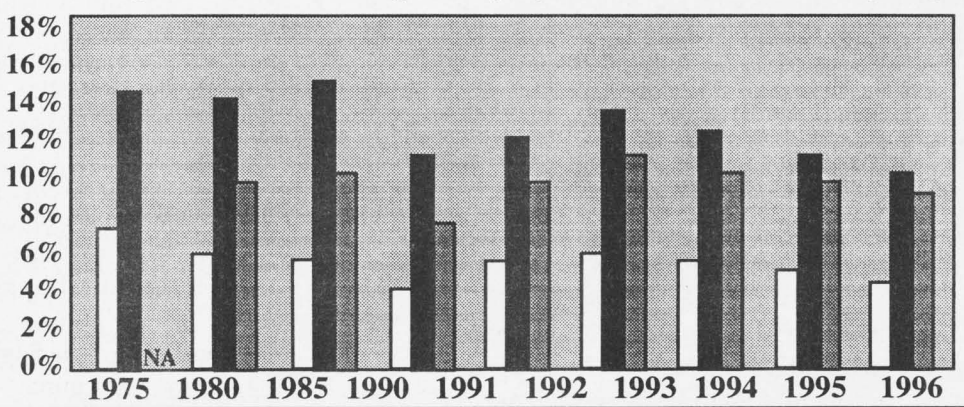


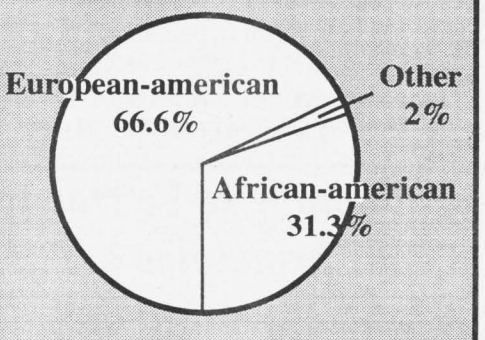
Percentage of Population by Race

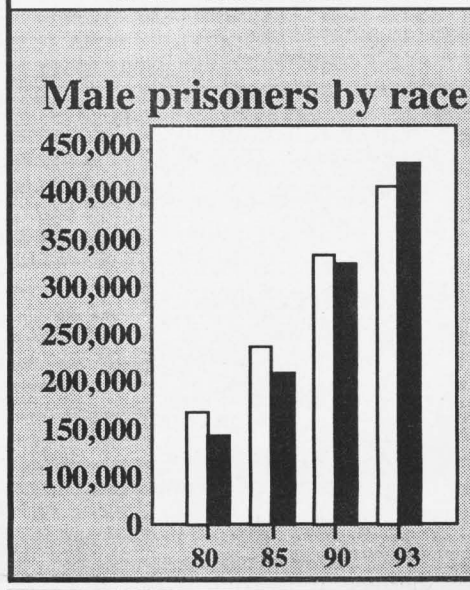
13%	African-american
1%	Native
4%	Asian- american
11%	Hispanic-american
73%	European-american

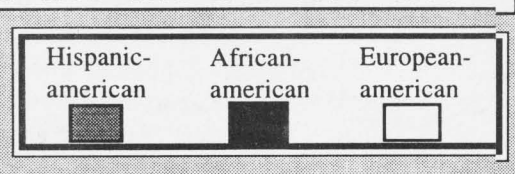


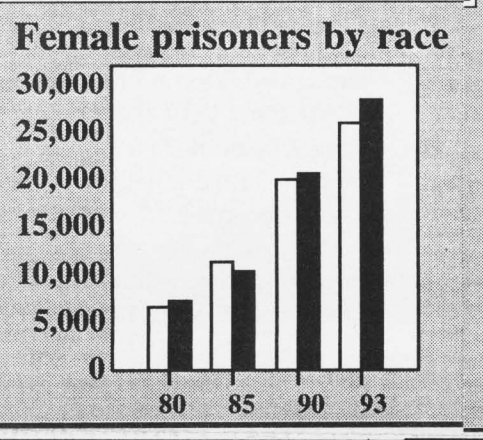


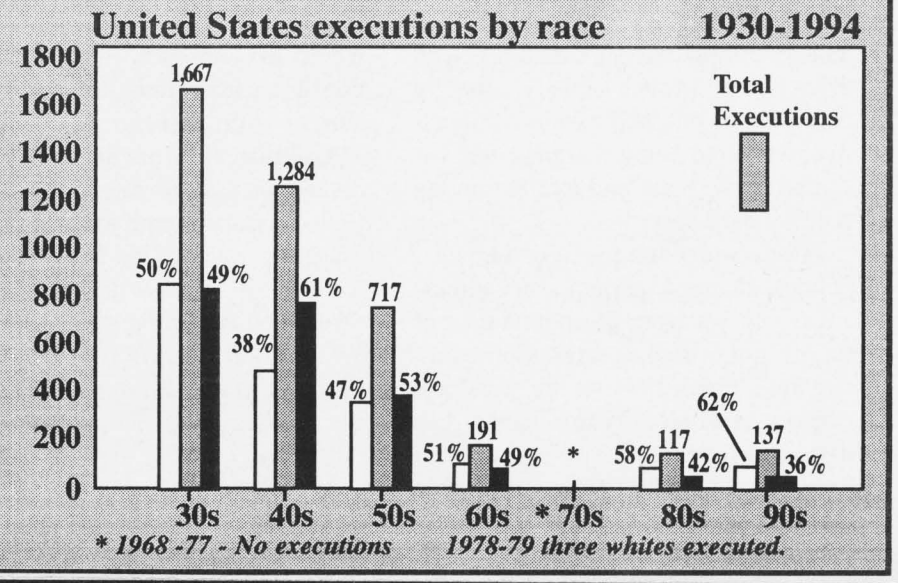








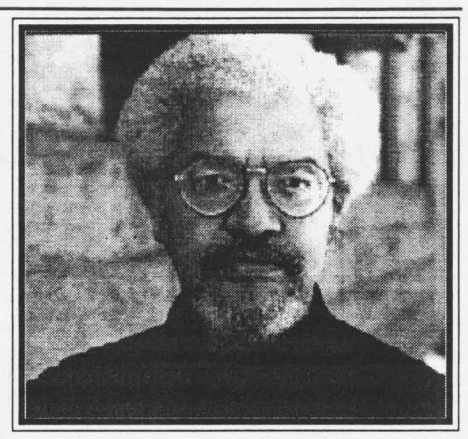




Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
DECEMBER S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**FEBRUARY** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	**Whenever the dollar is held supreme and capitalistic interests dominate, a higher value will always be placed upon property rights than upon human rights.** **Dick Gregory**		**1** **1995** - Zapatistas lead a rebellion against the Mexican government **1863**- Lincoln signs limited Emancipation Proclamation.	**2** **1995** - Supreme Court refuses to stop Texas execution of Jesse Dewayne Jacobs even though the prosecutors say he is innocent	**3** **1996** - Supporters of the Needle-exchange program attended the city council meeting with petition containing 1,500 signatures
4 **1995** - Texas executes Jesse Dewayne Jacobs: "There's not going to be an execution. This is premeditated murder."	**5** **1791**- Charleston, NC: free blacks present formal protest against ban of black-initiated lawsuits and black testimony	**6** **1773**- Massachusetts slaves petition the legislature for freedom **1776**- Paine publishes *Common Sense*	**7** **1955**- Marian Anderson made MET debut **1795**- Corrupt Georgia legislature sells 35 million acres of Qazoo River territory	**8** **1914**- MI: Doctors at natl. conference on Race Betterment call thin women imperfect, can't understand why they're favored	**9** **1995** - Barbara Durham sworn in as first female chief justice of WA Supreme Court **1996** - Lois Gibbs speaks in Centralia	**10** **1996** - "Defeat Discrimination Day" rally at the capitol sponsored by Hands Off Washington and Privacy Fund
11 **1904**- British troops in Somaliland massacre 1,000 dervishes **1911**- London police kill several Russian anarchists	**12** *full moon* ● **1910**- Russian Baroness Rosen almost starts incident when she asks President Taft for a cigarette at a White House dinner	**13** **1984**- Illinois: First time Nuclear Regulatory Commission refuses Nuclear operating license for a nearly completed plant	**14** **1913**- In Annapolis, turkey trot dancing is barred; the law states partners must keep three-inch space between them	**15** **1771**- N.C. assembly passes "Bloody Act" making rioters guilty of treason **1995** - 360 area code goes into effect	**16** **1893**- Dole and other planters overthrow the native government of Hawaii **1996** - Judith Billings states she has AIDS	**17** **1874**- Democrats seize gov., end Texas radical reconstruction **1893**- Dole, aided by U.S. Marines, takes over gov. buildings
18 **1996** - Candlewood Manor residents awarded $1.7 million by state toward the purchase of the mobile home park	**19** **1995** - Protesters calling themselves Liberty Park Alliance, block a logging crew access to a ten-acre site near TESC	**20** **1908**- NY: Ordinance bars women from smoking in public **1905**- Russian troops sent to protect St. Petersburg from revolt	**21** **1905**- 140,000 Russian workers and peasants begin march to Czar's Winter Palace asking for better working conditions	**22** **1995** - March in Washington, D.C. marks 22nd anniversary of Roe vs. Wade **1905**- Bloody Sunday: 500 Russians dead	**23** **1968**- Navy intelligence ship seized off N. Korean by N. Korean patrol boats **1977**- First episode of Roots televised	**24** **1814**- Creek Indian War: Tennessee militia is defeated at Enotachopoco Creek **1848**- Gold discovered in Sacramento
25 **1996** - 200 attend rally opposing armed TESC campus security **1996** - OPD uniform change: light blue shirts to navy blue	**26** **1910**- Police rescue British P. M. from suffragette attack **1907**- Congress bans corporate compaign contributions	**27** **1814**- Creek War: Tennessee militia defeat at Calibee Creek **1992**- Macy's files bankruptcy due to $3.5 billion debt	**28** **1712**- Tuscarora Indian War: North and South Carolina attack Tuscarora on the Neuse River. Three hundred are killed	**29** **1909**- CA limits immigrants to 5-year land titles **1996** - Thurston County SWAT team tear gas jail (oops)	**30** **1912**- England rejects Irish home rule **1948**- Mohandas D. Gandhi is assassinated **1956**- MLK, Jr.'s home bombed	**31** **1952**- Truman denounces McCarthy as pathological, untruthful, and character assassin who needs no information

Along the Color Line

How to Change Society



Dr. Manning Marable

Most Americans will tell you that practical, pragmatic politics is always defined by "center." How many times have we been told that the effective battleground for determining the future of society is the great American mainstream? That to be a serious factor in politics, we need to work inside the corridors of power, not on the outside. That we need to tailor our political message to be acceptable to contented, complacent suburbanites, who drive RVs and watch cable tv. That by becoming a centrist, or even conservative, we avoid being marginalized, excluded, locked out, and isolated on the political periphery.

You have to be true to your values, because your principles are at the heart of what politics should be.

I respectfully disagree. Fundamental political change in a democracy almost always comes from the boundaries of society, not from the center. Conscious, dedicated minorities, not the numerical majority, become catalyst for change. And if you build a political movement to stand firmly on the middle ground, you may find that ground collapsing from under your feet.

How do we achieve democratic change within a society? We must, first, understand how that society actually works. Who gets ahead, and who doesn't? Who is rewarded, and who is punished? Usually, the people we should learn fro are those not at the top of society, but at the bottom. Two centuries ago, if we had listened only to Thomas Jefferson, we would have gained some important insights in understanding the contradictory relationship between democracy and slavery. But we would have to listen to the slaves themselves, those who felt the sting of the lash, and those who were bartered and sold on the auction block, to really know the reality of slavery. We would have to learn from black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman.

Less than a century ago, women were denied the right to vote in this country. Generations of white male politicians justified and rationalized the exclusion of women. We would have to listen the early feminists and suffragists, such as Susan B. Anthony, Ida B, Wells, and Mary Church Terrell, to comprehend how sexism compromised the promise democracy.

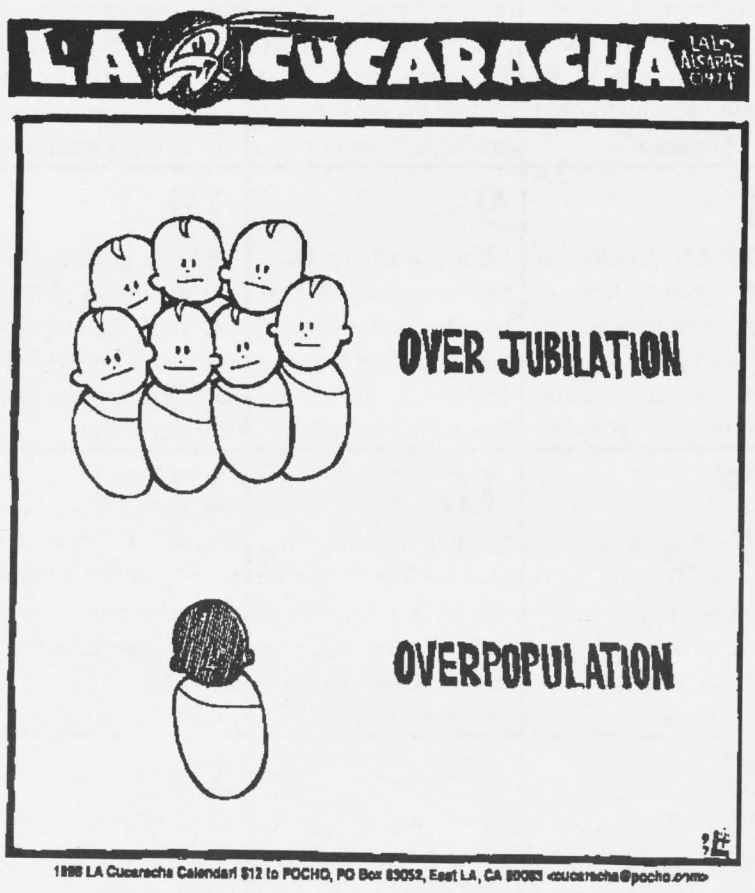
How do you achieve change in a democratic society? By recognizing that in a democracy, the majority can be wrong. Only a generation ago, racial segregation was legal in the United States. There were separate and unequal water fountains, public hotels, restaurants and churches. Birmingham, Alabama's city council even passed a law making it illegal for blacks and whites to play checkers together! The overwhelming majority of good, middle class whites in Birmingham supported their racist chief of police, Bull Connor, and their pro-segregationist governor, George C. Wallace. But they were wrong. Martin Luther King Jr. did not say, let us wait until the majority of Southern whites change their minds about segregation. Martin did not counsel patience, or try to moderate his message of "Freedom Now" to read "Freedom Someday."

Several years ago, Proposition 187 was being debated in California, which proposed discriminatory policies against undocumented immigrants, mostly Latino people. A majority of California's registered voters supported this initiative. We must not be afraid to say that the initiative was wrong. Amendment Two was passed in Colorado several years ago, which attempted to outlaw local measures protecting the civil rights of lesbians and gays, the same rights that other Americans take for granted. We should affirm our belief in equal justice for all by saying that the homophobic politics behind the measure was mean-spirited, discriminatory and wrong. We should never be afraid to lose an electoral campaign when we are fighting to affirm democratic rights and equal justice for all.

In a curious way, the conservatives understand this far better than most liberals. You have to be true to your values, because your principles are at the heart of what politics should be. The ideologues of the Far Right, such as Bill Bennett and William Kristol, ground their politics in a set of values. Their only problem is that they've got the wrong set of values.

How do we achieve progressive change? By celebrating our divine discontent with the way things are. Contented, satisfied people rarely want things to change too much. If you want to find out what new directions history is taking our society, don't wallow in the mainstream--stand at the edge, at the boundaries. Listen to the poets and the non-conventional music of young people. Learn from those who have little or nothing to lose. Feel the anxiety of those forty million Americans today who lack any medical insurance. Spend time working in a homeless shelter, or walking a picket line with trade unionists. To be divinely discontent is to want our democratic ideals and our egalitarian hopes to be realized in the world around us. It is to challenge conformity, to push the boundaries of "the way things are" to the "way things should be."

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, New York City. "Along the Color Line" is distributed free of charge and regularly appears in over 325 black and progressive publications worldwide.



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The 'Progressive Roundtable Forum'
Coming to TCTV/Chan. 3 in January.
Production date: Sat. Jan. 10, 2pm. Want to participate? Audience needed. Call Chris @705-3528.

Up Front

An Invitation to Conversation

Jerome Johnson

Earlier this month, I watched Clinton's "Town Hall Meeting on Race Relations," live on C-SPAN, and I loved every minute of it.

One of the first things I liked was the fact that Clinton himself took responsibility, and walked his talk for once. He didn't just hold a meeting to keep a promise. He got directly and personally involved, hands on, to the point of serving as moderator. He did it masterfully, a Rhodes scholar who treated ordinary people as well as high-powered clerics, academics and others with courtesy and genuine respect.

Long-time readers of this column know that until recently, I didn't have much respect for the president I've called Slick Willie. I remember Lani Guinier and Jocelyn Elders, Ricky Ray Rector, and Somalia and Iraq. I remember NAFTA and GATT. And I think of Gen. Hugh Shelton, the first Green Beret to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

When I heard Clinton was going to have his first meeting in Akron, I didn't expect much. I figured that Professor Franklin would chair a group of business people, academics, politicians and a few students for local color. Clinton would make a few remarks at the beginning, listen attentively, leave without saying anything on camera, then issue a thank-you statement the next day (after initial reviews in the media).I was wrong.

As soon as he was introduced, Clinton took personal charge of the meeting. He held a microphone and discussed race and racism directly with the people there, and all kinds of people were there. He was kind, courteous, probing. He listened when people described their experiences with race and racism--he didn't cut anyone off, and he asked follow-up questions and listened to the answers.

He created such a safe atmosphere that people discussed their fears, their differences, their diverse backgrounds with candor but without rancor.

He created such a safe atmosphere that people discussed their fears, their differences, their diverse backgrounds with candor but without rancor. Even though I couldn't participate in Akron, I felt engaged, especially after C-SPAN's phone line opened. Then, it really became a national conversation.

Most of the callers liked the meeting, the way people had talked so honestly about their perspectives. Some spoke of their own experiences. One person called and identified himself as "a white man, from Austin, Texas." He said that he wasn't a racist, and had a couple of friends who are black. He said he was sorry that racism still "happens" but he wasn't responsible for slavery--that was done by people who had nothing to do with him, a long time ago.

When I heard this, I tightened up inside. I growled to my roommate, "So that's what this is. He's sorry. Well, guess what--it does have everything to do with him. That's because of slavery and racism, I'm in this country. I have deal with it everyday. It's true that he didn't participate in slavery, but unlike him, black people are still recovering from slavery and Jim and Jane Crow.

Then a "black man, I'm calling from Baltimore." He said he was retired from the Navy and supported affirmative action. "I gained from it, no question, but I had to work twice as hard just to get considered for chief. And that was during the Cold War...and it wasn't just me. Lots of other black sailors had it hard, you know."

I was talking with a brother the other day. He said, "Man, I almost with they'd take their fuckin' affirmative action away."

He saw the surprise on my face. "Be cool--I ain't changed. We need affirmative action. I'm fighting I-200, you know. But I'm so mad now, I almost wish they'd vote it down. Watch what happens when white veterans and white women stop getting hired, because according to stats, in Washington they're the ones most hired by affirmative action.

"Do not despair, my man." He grinned. "We'll just keep on doing what we've been doing for hundreds of years.

We work twice as hard to make it half as far. After they take affirmative action--if they do--then, whatever. We'll keep achieving. And when we do, they have to face it--no matter what..." He clapped me on the shoulder. "Merry Christmas."

* * *

On February 21, I'm going to moderate a town meeting on race, bigotry, and affirmative action. I invite everyone to come and share perspectives and experiences. A courteous, searching discussion which will help solve the race/racism in this country.

It's the beginning of the Answer.

In Washington D.C., Clinton names Bill Lann Lee to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

In Akron, Ohio, a community reflects on the power of the President to effect social change.

And in Thurston Country, there will be holiday lights a-twinkling in the cold and clear December nights.

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HOWARD ZINN

Author of *A People's History of the United States*

IN OLYMPIA

Wednesday, February 4

Capital High School Gym

7:00pm Music with Citizen's Band

7:30pm Talk by Howard Zinn followed by Q&A Session

"Bringing Democracy Alive"

Tickets: *On Sale in December*
$10 General Admission
$5 (High School Students, low-income)
Ticket Outlets: Liberation Cafe, Bulldog News, Traditions Cafe, Rainy Day Records, Positively 4th St., others TBA.

Benefit for the Olympia Political Cultural Center. Call 352-7336 for info.

Sister Cities -- Has it only been ten years?

Jean Eberhardt

Could it be that only a decade has flown by since people of Thurston County began working in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua? No! I know that some folks were active in support of the insurrection that overthrew the dictatorship in 1979. After the triumph, a friend went to volunteer in the new national literacy campaign; a few more volunteered to pick coffee and cotton to help rebuild the country's economy; even more went on Witness For Peace delegations or other organized study tours; some of our local and state representatives went on fact-finding missions; some folks moved to Managua and others moved to the campo where they worked for years on end for negligible salaries because it was the right thing to do; and many, many more stayed right here at home to fight against our government's determination to undermine the sovereignty of Nicaragua.

The contra war, organized and funded by the Reagon-Bush administrations, had to be stopped because it was reprehensible in all aspects, illegal and we did not buy the line that our country's national security was at risk. An estimated 100,000 U.S. citizens went to Nicaragua in the eighties and stood with Nicaraguan citizens. Many of us protested outside of the U.S. Embassy in Managua. How many millions never went to Nicaragua, but participated in demonstrations and contributed in a myriad of ways to a visible movement that demanded an end to U.S. intervention in the Central American wars? Certainly, there has been solidarity with the people of Nicaragua for longer than 10 years.

The January 15th event at the Capitol Theater commemorates the Olympia to Nicaragua Construction Brigade's 1988 arrival in Santo Tomás and the beginning of a relationship between our communities. Our six weeks of work on the early stages of the building for the Women's Sewing Cooperative was carried out at the edge of a war zone. The fourteen of us lived with Tomasino families, ate thick corn tortillas with them, listened to their individual and collective stories of the terrifying contra attack on their town three months before, and watched them continue to plan for their community's current and future needs. We were inspired by their determination and their activism.

In the fall of 1988, as the city of Managua hosted the U.S./Nicaragua Sister Cities Conference, Reverend Richard Smith convened a gathering in Olympia to explore the idea of building a sister relationship. Over the course of a year, the meetings and interest continued, and we decided to approach the community that those of us from the construction brigade had already grown close to. The elected leadership and activists of Santo Tomás heartily accepted our invitation to develop a people-to-people relationship. As such, we did not solicit official endorsement of our organization from the Thurston County commissioners. We incorporated as a non-profit and set about our work of building a mutually beneficial relationship. Over the years, TSTSCA has been involved in material aid campaigns with education and health care foci, and we have learned a great deal from each other. So it was that Santo Tomás, a small town and its rural surroundings in the heart of Nicaragua, came to be our "sister county."

The January 15th event at the Capitol Theater commemorates the Olympia to Nicaragua Construction Brigade's 1988 arrival in Santo Tomás and the beginning of a relationship between our communities.

On January 15th at the Capitol Theater, come honor these ten years of exchange with the people of Santo Tomás. Please give a warm welcome to Juana Rodriguez and Yessenia Solís who are here visiting schools and our community.

Material Aid for Santo Tomás:

All donations are tax deductible, ask for a receipt if you need one.

TSTSCA, 1958 Westridge Lane NW, Olympia WA 98502 Call Jean at 943-8642 for more information, or to arrange drop-off.

Dental supplies: quantities of amalgam, grinding burrs of all shapes and a curing light.

New School supplies: Pens, pencils, scissors, hole punches, staplers and staples, tape, colored marking pens, crayons, large colored and white chalk, pocket calculators, maps, and money to purchase paper in Nicaragua (it's too heavy to send).

Money for Spanish language books for the small public library in Santo Tomás.

Large suitcases, either hard shell or soft sided (the bigger the better). These donated suitcases will allow us to send material aid on check through luggage when our visitors return to Nicaragua or folks from Thurston County go to visit or work in Santo Tomás. Airlines have been balking about accepting our well packed boxes, so we are appealing to you to unearth and hand over those really big suitcases that you don't want to lug anywhere, anyhow!

Nicaragua, what now?

After destabilizing the Sandinista government in the eighties through a trade embargo and war, after Iran-Contragate was exposed, and after last year's disclosure of the lawlessness of the CIA as drug importer/contra war financing/crack pouring into our cities, Nicaragua is once again swept under the rug. The CIA continues to act with impunity and, literally, get away with murder. It's been several years since the contra war came to an end, yet a war certainly continues in Nicaragua. The war of the International Monetary Fund against the "third world."

The IMF imposes its latest "Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program" on Nicaragua. This program will bring more devastating government buget cuts, especially to the education and health care sectors. How far can a people be pushed? Come listen to the perspectives of two visitors from our sister county of Santo Tomás.

Please welcome two visitors from Santo Tomás, Nicaragua

Join the Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association in welcoming two public school teachers/activists from Nicaragua and in celebrating ten years of solidarity with the people of Santo Tomás. Juana Rodriguez and Yessenia Solís will be here for over three weeks, visiting schools and strengthening the connections between our communities. Their bienvenida (welcoming) is on January 15th, at 7 pm at the Capitol Theater in downtown Olympia. TSTSCA will present two short films about past and present Nicaragua: "Vamos a Hacer un País (We're Going to Build a Country)" (1986) and "Deadly Embrace: Nicaragua, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund" (1996). Ms. Rodriguez was interviewed in 1986 in the first film, after the contra assaulted her family (please see her mini-biography next page).

Films will be followed by live music by Los Calaveras and a reception with the visitors. Delicious desserts and coffee will be available, to raise more money for a new sustainable farm project in our sister county. The farm project will produce food for the comedor infantil (300+ children get a solid meal daily). This benefit has sliding scale admission: $5-$10. Don't miss this inspiring event on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday! (866-1912)

Other Public events where they will be speaking:

January 18th, 3 p.m., Slide Presentation at the Olympia Fellowship Of Reconciliation's "3rd Sunday at 3," Thurston County Courthouse, Building 1, Rm 152.

January 22nd, 12 p.m., "Nicaragua's regressive Public Education agenda and more," the Library Lobby of the Evergreen State College.

January 30th, 7 p.m., "Nicaragua Now: from the micro-perspective of Santo Tomás," at the Liberation Café, above Bulldog News on 4th Ave. in downtown Olympia.

February 3rd, 6:30 pm, Farewell potluck for Juana Rodriguez and Yessenia Solís at the First United Methodist Church, corner of Legion and Boundary on the Eastside of Olympia. Bring the whole family and good food to share; we'll provide the music, silverware, plates and beverages.

Yessenia Solís Miranda
Public grade school teacher,
Santo Tomás, Nicaragua

Yessenia, 27 years old, was born to a poor family headed by a single parent after her father died. Her mother, at 20 years of age, began raising the five children alone.

Yessenia and her older brother helped to support their family by selling homemade food products door to door across the town. "My mother was determined to keep us in school even though our economic situation was extremely difficult."

Yessenia finished her primary education at 14 years old and entered the five year high school. At that time, Yessenia also joined the volunteer literacy campaign that brought national illiteracy rates down from 52% of the population to 12% within a few short years of concerted effort. She is one of the almost 100,000 young people who freely gave their time to help democratize Nicaragua by teaching the basic skills necessary for citizen participation in the running of their own country.

Yessenia accompanied the health brigades to vaccinate the people of the rural communities against polio and other diseases. She spent one school vacation voluntarily harvesting coffee beans on a state farm to help the country's economy.

Juana Rodríguez Gaitan
Public preschool teacher,
Santo Tomás, Nicaragua

Juana, 26 years old, was born at home to a poor campesino family of 10 children, 7 of whom survive. The rural community where they lived offered only minimal education possibilities until the 1979 revolutionary triumph over a brutal dictatorship that lasted 43 years. "A new sun shone down and opened a new horizon for us with the great literacy crusades." Juana's family housed the volunteers that came to their community to teach children and adults to read and to write. As a young teenager, she joined the work of helping the adult literacy classes and later became the coordinator of the local project. She also assisted in the vaccination campaigns of the eighties.

In 1985, Juana was chosen to accompany a 2,000 strong youth brigade to Cuba for five months to learn teaching methodologies.

"In December of that same year, the tranquility of our lives was shattered. A group of approximately 35 armed men surrounded our home and began firing like crazy. These strangers were the contra, the counter-revolutionaries, who broke into our house and who split up to search all of the other houses for Sandinista sympathizers...My family was 'guilty' of working for change in our country. They set fire to our home. I do

The MultiLateral Agreement on Investment: Basic Facts

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment

Michael MacSems

The MAI is a new international economic agreement being negotiated at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The MAI is designed to make it easier for individual and corporate investors to move assets - whether money or production facilities - across international borders. The MAI would take the investment provisions of NAFTA, amplify these provisions, and apply them world-wide.

What is the Status of the MAI?

Confidential negotiations have been underway since May 1995 within the OECD and are now at an advanced stage. The agreement was originally scheduled to be completed by May 26, 1997, but the deadline has been extended for another year. Meeting are occurring in Paris every six weeks. When complete, the MAI will be presented to the U.S. Congress and other OECD countries (the world 29 richest) for approval. Developing nations will also be encouraged to join. Despite the importance of the agreement and the advanced state of negotiations, few outside of government and international business circles are aware of the MAI.

What would the MAI do?

Countries that sign the MAI will be required to:

- Open all economic sectors, including real estate, broadcasting, and natural resources to foreign ownership;

-Treat foreign investors no less favorably than domestic firms;

The MAI is designed to make it easier for individual and corporate investors to move assets - whether money or production facilities - across international borders.

- Remove performance requirements, which are laws that require investors to behave in a certain way in exchange for market access.

- Remove restrictions on the movement of capital;

-Compensate investors in full when their assets are expropriated, either through seizure or "unreasonable" regulation;

- Accept a dispute-resolution process allowing investors to sue governments for damages before international panels when they believe a county's (or a state or municipality's) laws are in violation of MAI rules; and

- Ensure that states and localities comply with the MAI

Proponents of the MAI claim that the agreement will provide needed protection for U.S. and other international investors against discrimination and expropriation, open markets to U.S. investors on favorable terms and help business, consumers and workers in the long-run by improving the efficiency of the global economy. The most prominent non-governmental proponents are business groups, including the U.S. Council for International Business, the National Association of Manufactures and the European - American Chamber of Commerce.

Opponents of the MAI argue that the proposed agreement will accelerate an economic and environmental "race to the bottom" as countries feel new pressure to compete for increasingly mobile investment capital by lowering wages and environmental safeguards. Opponents also claim that the MAI will allow investors to challenge legitimate regulatory safeguards that enjoy widespread public support but are viewed by investors as impediments to the free flow of capital. The public is just beginning to learn about the MAI, but there is already substantial concern about the agreement from a number of environmental, labor, consumer, and women's organizations.

The Preamble Collaborative
1737 21st Street NW
Washington DC 20009
http://rtknet.org/preamble

Olympia MAI-NOT!

The 1990's appear to be as historic a period as those years just after WWII when a number of multilateral institutions were created (the UN, NATO, GATT, IMF and World Bank). With successive waves of international "free-trade" agreements, such as NAFTA, WTO, APEC and MAI, being foisted upon us, it may seem that the forces of globalization are too large to challenge. Olympia MAI-Not! is a loose association of concerned locals who believe that the over-reaching of the global elites demands hope and grass roots citizen action, rather then cynicism and despair. Olympia MAI-Not! is meant to serve as a matrix for those concerned enough to educate themselves and raise the profile of globalization and its consequences within our community. Our activesim needs to go beyond organizing to defeat specific trade deals. We must help create a political climate were citizens have a critical awareness of the fundamental issues at stake.

Activities envisioned for the winter and spring of 1998 are informational tabling in public places, public educational events, lobbying, and a downtown mural. Have you got any talents or ideas to put to use? Lets be creative.

Our first event will be at the Liberation Cafe on Friday January 9th. The evening is called GLOBALIZATION: Educating Ourselves to Make a Difference. Sally Sariano, Sonya Sivesind and Michael MacSems will discuss NAFTA, WTO, APEC and MAI (making sense of the alphabet soup of international trade deals). The idea is that we will all leave inspired to take a stand during this historic period. For more info call 754-9585.

Eleven years ago, during her third year of high school, Yessenia was hired (at $35. per month) to teach evening adult education classes. She supplemented her income by hand-washing and ironing others' clothes. Yessenia assumed financial responsibility for herself as her mother focused on providing for the younger children.

After graduating from high school at 19, she enrolled in an accelerated teaching certification program and received her title, enabling her to teach in the primary schools.

"I am a fourth grade teacher in a school that attends to children who, by and large, come from families in desperate economic situations. I have 52 students in my classroom." Unemployment levels vary from 60-80 % across the country, leaving the majority to survive by creatively participating in the informal labor sector. Most self-employed people are marginally existing.

Yessenia has been a union member of the National Teachers' Association of Nicaragua for ten years. Yessenia is part of an active national movement to try to make education free and accessible again as it was in the eighties. Education is out of reach of many Nicaraguans.

Yessenia has worked as a Spanish language teacher with the Evergreen State College students (TESC) who have spent the last two spring quarters in Santo Tomás on individual learning contracts. She is a member of the town's all-volunteer community development committee (CDC) that maintains a good working relationship with the Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association. She is looking forward to meeting next spring's students.

Students from the first two years of the TESC/TSTSCA/CDC collaborative project (and other sister county members) are organizing her visit to Evergreen and Thurston County from Jan. 12 to Feb. 5, 1998. Yessenia is particulary interested in visiting public K-12 schools and connecting with teachers, students and parents. She would like to develop more sister relations between Santo Tomás schools and Thurston County schools.

not like to think about those 17 days that completely turned my world upside down." As Juana's family could not return to their destroyed home, they were resettled into the town of Santo Tomás.

"In 1986, the Ministry of Education of Santo Tomás placed me in barrio Pancasan to work with preschoolers.

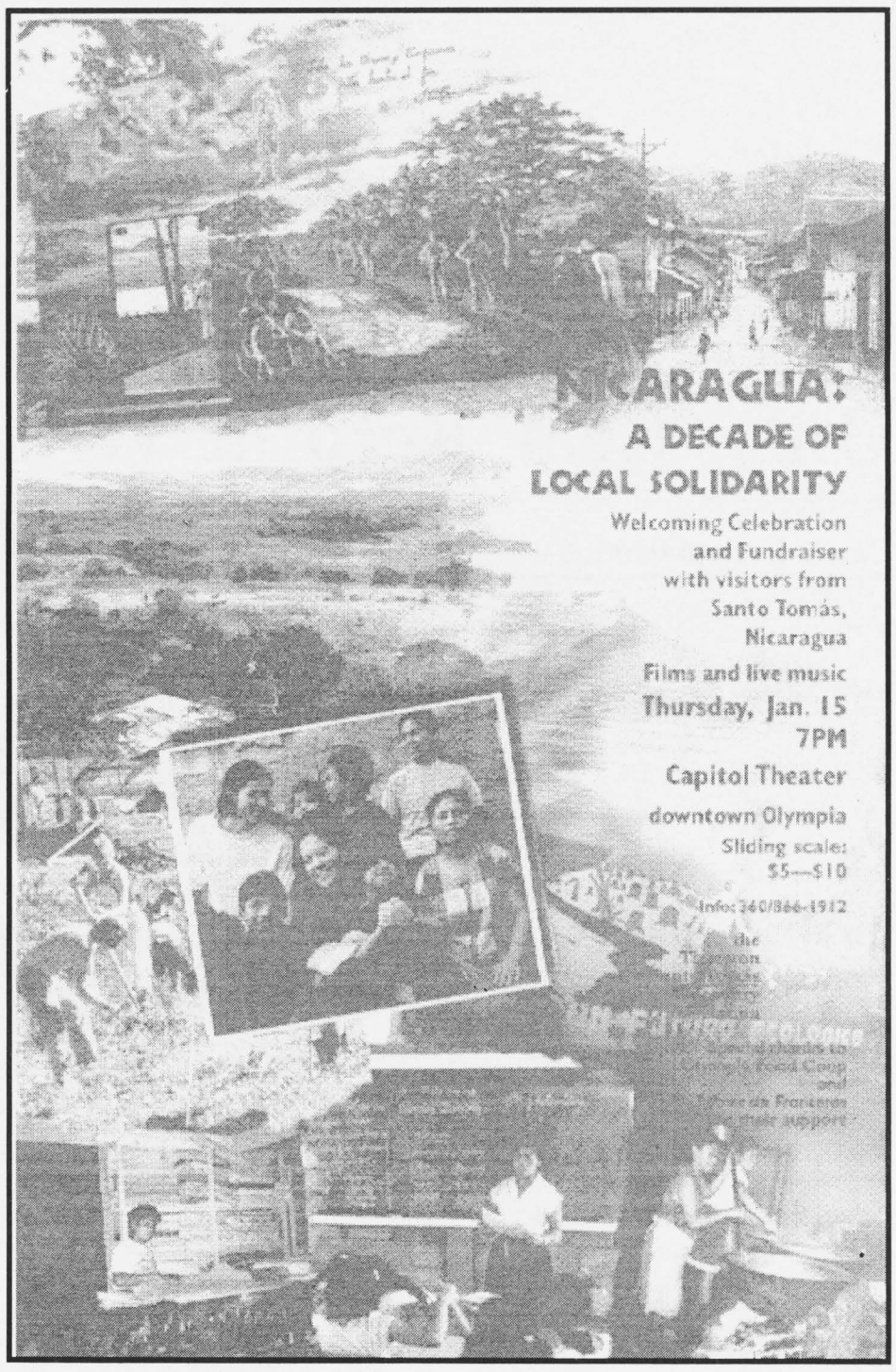
"I am also involved with the women's sewing cooperative and am its current president." The co-op and a sewing school work in the two-story building that was the project of the 14 member Olympia to Nicaragua Construction Brigade in 1988. They compete against the cheap, used clothing from the US that now inundates the markets and has shut down sewing cooperatives across Nicaragua.

In 1990, the US financed and directed contra war came to an end when the US organized coalition won the elections and unseated the Sandinista government. Juana was involved in the electoral proceedings as president of the voting tables in her neighborhood. The political swing to the right brought a complete standstill to the forward momentum of the ambitious social justice programs of the eighties. The momentum began to head backwards.

In that same year, Juana received her basic education teaching certificate. One year later, she was certified to teach in the primary schools. Juana is a proud union member of the National Teachers' Association of Nicaragua. She continues teaching in Santo Tomás' poorest neighborhood's preschool and refuses to charge the "voluntary" tuition to the families of the children.

Juana is a small woman in stature but a determined fighter by experience. Her preschool is "sistered" with the Olympia Community School (on TESC property) and she is looking forward to strengthening those ties. She'll be visiting public grade schools and high schools as well.

Juana is a powerful representative of a visible social activism in Santo Tomás, Nicaragua, an activism that is certain to be of inspiration to citizens of Thurston County.



(Critical Mass, continued)

another 1780 are injured every year by cars. Government and police response has been to blame the victim rather than bringing traffic under control and really taking steps to ensure safety of all: lowering the speed limit and limiting car use for starters. But as in roadkill, so with our government: that which is lighter or slower dies because cars are in a hurry. Your life for a minute of their time saved.

Bicyclist and pedestrians are traffic! We deserve the same access to the roads that motorists have and the promise and protections for our safety under the law rather than being harassed for complicating traffic (motorist) efficiency. Translation: keep your cars off OUR roads!

Olympia Critical Mass had its first run in April 1997. Several people participated. Every month since then, the numbers have expanded and contracted, due to weather, student population present, or overall energy. There have been runins with the cops, bicyclists getting hit by arrogant downtown car-commuters, motorists yelling expletives as they zoomed around the same block over and over, and more. There has also been news coverage. Special thanks to the Olympian for all their moral support and their big thumbs down. CM is powered by such criticism. In the midst of all this, there has also been consensus decision-making among the Critical Mass participants, helping hands, and solidarity. CM has "picked-up" interested on-lookers on foot, skateboard, and bike as they headed downtown. This is community; people-powered transportation and people powered by the belief that change can and should occur.

The next date for Critical Mass is Friday, January 30. For further details, contact by e-mail: cessa@juno.com. Or Not on-line? Look for fliers. See you there!

Olympia Police Shoot Distraught Man

WIP News Service

Pat Tassoni, a member of the local group known as CopWatch, delivered the following to the Olympia City Council at the meeting (12/16/97) immediately after the shooting of a civilian by members of the Olympia Police Department.

Last week I got a call from a resident of Villa Capri who told me something that I was hoping never to hear. "The police just shot my neighbor." After telling that resident to find everyone who witnessed the incident to talk to the police and tell them everything they saw, not necessarily what the police were specifically asking for, I was asked if I had any suggestions for explaining this incident to the resident's child.

Not only does that child need an explanation to restore its faith in the police, so does the public. And that's why I'm here tonight, primarily to ask some important questions.

Every time a police officer fires a gun the public becomes a little more nervous. Whether one accidently shoots out a grocery store window, but especially when one is used against a human being. The OPD and *the Olympian* did the regular "Wild Man with a Knife" story bringing in a number of loaded questions about alcohol, drugs, mental stability, etc. to vindicate the officers choice of action before a proper review. We saw this a few years ago when the OPD killed Danny Spencer. The initial headlines read LSD this, LSD that. But when the investigation was over, LSD had nothing to do with his death. It's true that something needs to be said to the public initially, but I would hope and ask the OPD to be more professional about it.

The investigation itself got off to a good start (in a limited sense) by handing it over to the Sheriff's Department. We may ask if a child can make distinctions between police departments and soldiers for that matter, and for those of us skeptical about police objectivity and the code of silence, it's only a limited pacifier. I would like to see more constructive outreach to the public. To that end I would propose a civilian sit in on the review processes including the Olympia shooting review and the overall one being handled by the Sheriff's office. And then that could become a model for future reveiw processes. The public deserves to be involved and not always just on the receiving end of the police actions and processes.

Every time a police officer fires a gun the public becomes a little more nervous.

And finally I would like to point out what should be obvious: that guns do not need to be used as the only response to incidents and I think rarely are used to solve anything. There are kinder, gentler ways of taking people into custody. An officer with a gun carries it to protect himself, which makes sense. But I think that gets lost sometimes and it is used as a license to force a situation. Someone suicidal or with other mental conditions is not necessarily in the state of mind to be aggressively confronted.

In Seattle after a SWAT team raided a held-up resident in his apartment, he was killed with 21 wounds in his back. He had a sword and an officer was killed in the raid. Just this year someone with a sword tied up downtown Seattle for 11 hours as police waited him out. No one was killed -- not the man or any police officers. They closed off traffic for most of the day and offered to buy the guy lunch and gave him blankets and such. The change from the former example to the latter was after the public's outraged response to the raid and the committment of Seattle's new Police Chief.

I don't want to see this happen again here in Olympia, as I'm sure we all don't, and I think there are steps we can take to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Mayor Bob Jacobs responded by assuring those present and those viewing TCTV that the officers would surely be exonerated in the review process and that Olympia should consider itself lucky because this is only the second time in the past twenty years that the police have shot someone, considering all that the police deal with. Frank Hoffman, a member of CopWatch spoke about a study done by a police accountability consultant. The study expected to find that blacks were the targeted group, but it was found that the police disproportionately shot the mentally ill. With new proper training such incidents decreased and the problem was resolved. City Manager, Dick Cushing, indicated that a civilian would be sitting in on the shooting review board.

Only Real Reform Will Curtail Police Brutality

Daryle Lamont Jenkins

Our officials are all talk and no action when it comes to ending police brutality.According to the Department of Justice, 47,000 cases of police brutality were reported in the United States between 1986 and 1994. Of those, 293 were prosecuted. In my home state of New Jersey, a police officer has never been incarcerated after killing a civilian, according to the New Jersey Coalition Against Police Brutality.

But the August brutalizing of Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, in New York City may finally bring action.

The Congressional Black Caucus is demanding change, as is the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights. Both groups came to Washington, D.C., mid-September to call attention to the problem. Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., announced at the Congressional Black Caucus' 27th annual conference that select members of House Judiciary Committee will hold hearings on police brutality. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-Texas, and Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., are on that committee and were on hand. "We are here to listen, but we are also here to act," Jackson-Lee told an enthusiastic crowd.

Individuals, mostly from New York and New Jersey, went before C-SPAN cameras, often with tears, to tell how police have harassed, threatened or assaulted them, and to tell of loved ones they have lost to policemen.

For too long, elected officials and police organizations have been turning a blind eye to these accounts.

Why, for example, does New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani feel compelled to voice his outrage and scream for the death penalty when a police officer is killed, yet remain silent when the roles are reversed? Giuliani attacked Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson, a capital punishment opponent, for not seeking the death penalty after an officer chasing a suspect fell on a broken mirror and bled to death. However, when a navy veteran was killed by a police officer, Giuliani distanced himself from the incident and barely commented on it.

We must reign in vague laws that allow police officers to harass citizens and walk-away scot-free.

Then there was the case in Elizabeth, N.J., last October where a police officer brutally assaulted a 17 year-old boy who accidentally ran into his cruiser. The local Fraternal Order of Police attempted to wage a campaign to oust the judge who rightly convicted that officer.

We seem to be on the right track, but as we learned from the Rodney King case, it is not that simple. For true reform, we must revamp the entire criminal-justice system. We must reign in vague laws that allow police officers to harass citizens and walk-away scot-free. Many at the Congressional Black Caucus conference supported the idea of a community police-review board with subpoena powers to monitor the police, something that is set up in New York, but was ignored by Giuliani until the Abner Louima case forced him to respond.

We should also call to task the folks in Washington. Ron Daniels, who heads the Center of Constitutional Rights, organized a demonstration outside the Justice Department building on the same day as the Congressional Black Caucus conference and met with Attorney General Janet Reno. According to Daniels, the attorney general's office is supposed to issue a report on police brutality each year. 'We're not aware that such a report has been issued, and if it has been issued we don't want to hear about it," he said.

The Congressional Black Caucus conference focused on a number of issues, from affirmative action to the plight of black farmers--all very important subjects. Every other effort we make, however, comes to naught if the issue of police brutality continues to go unchecked.

Daryle Lamont Jenkins is a writer and activist living in Somerset, N.J.

Union Time in Vermont

Ron Jacobs

The union seed planted over 18 months ago at the University of Vermont (UVM) in Burlington bore its first fruit on December 10, 1997. Blue collar workers in the service and maintenance unit of the workforce (representing custodians, housekeepers, tradespeople, recyclers, movers, etc.) voted to be represented by the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America (UE) and by doing so, formed one of Vermont's largest union locals. This was a campaign challenged at every turn by a notoriously anti-union administration. In the final weeks before the vote, the tactics engaged in by the administration's spokespeople included intimidation, threats of layoffs, and outright lying. These tactics did diminish the pro-union vote, but the well organized campaign put together by UVM workers and UE organizers held together.

A Brief History

In April 1996, the UVM administration met with midlevel management to discuss their solution to yet another "budget crisis". Like most previous solutions, the proposal they presented included several changes to employee compensation. Foremost among these were a fivefold increase in out-of-pocket fees paid to medical providers at each visit, an increase in premiums paid by employees for medical benefits, an end to tuition remission for employees and their children, and changes in the retirement plan. After the meeting, a sympathetic manager posted these proposals on a staff bulletin board and within the next few days they were transmitted across the university via electronic mail and leaflets. The administration responded by calling a series of open forums to discuss the proposed changes.

Between the time these forums were announced and actually held, a group of workers gathered together to print leaflets suggesting the idea of unionization. These leaflets were distributed at the forums which were so well attended that they were moved to the largest rooms on campus and even then were filled to capacity. Needless to say, no one was happy with the proposed benefits changes. Almost immediately the administration began to back off, stating that their proposals were "tentative" and just to start a "conversation." Meanwhile, in the hospital where medical school faculty and students work, massive layoffs took place.

This was (and is) why we need a union -- not only to stem further reductions in compensation, but also to have a legally recognized structure for negotiating future salaries and benefits.

The first open meeting of the UVM-Employee Organizing Committee (UVMEOC) was held Wednesday, May 1, 1996. Over 25 OVM staff and faculty attended. Attendees included maintenance, library, and clerical staff, as well as faculty members. Opening discussion centered on the current situation regarding benefits changes at UVM, the recent layoffs at Fletcher Allen, and the recent union vote at UVM Police Services (a vote which was in favor of the unionization 16 - 1). UVM employees who previously worked in unionized workplaces shared their reasons for unionization -- ranging from a sense of dignity and equanimity with the administration to bread and butter issues like compensation and maternity leave. Another factor mentioned was the existence of an established, legally recognized grievance process with representation. Following the introductory testimonies and discussion, talk turned to the financial situation at UVM and the administration's attempts to remedy that situation from the paychecks of staff and faculty. A point brought up by the current Staff Council president was that we had to acknowledge that there were financial problems at UVM and if everyone did a little these problems would not reach a crisis point. The response to this was: While it is true there are problems, UVM staff had done enough to help management solve the university's problems. It was time to look somewhere else besides our compensation packages. This was (and is) why we need a union -- not only to stem further reductions in compensation, but also to have a legally recognized structure for negotiating future salaries and benefits.

Over the next few months, various members of the UVMEOC met and discussed unionization. Finally, in late summer, we decided we needed outside help and began to meet with union representatives from various unions. After several weeks of these meetings, we decided to ask UE to help us, given their democratic structure, commitment to organizing, social justice agenda, and national resources. In early October we held our first organizing committee with UE representatives. An energetic program of home and worksite visits began and on November 23, 1996, we held our first general meeting. This meeting was attended by over 100 workers and resulted in a name change to United Employees of UVM (UEUVM), an organizing plan, and a program, which we called our Points for Progress. These points are:

Dignity and Respect -- As a democratic and inclusive organization, our goal is to create the best possible working environment and a climate of mural respect and dignity for all workers regardless of grade level, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other categorical classification.

Wages -- Revamp current system of wages/salaries and classifications to put us on a par with other comparable universities.

Benefits -- Secure and strengthen current benefits with the ability to negotiate improvements in the future such as family leave and vision care.

Grievance Procedure -- A fair and effective procedure, standardized across the campus, to resolve workplace problems and enforce contract gains with the ability to submit disputes to a neutral arbitrator.

Job Security -- Protections to guard against further reductions in the workforce. No subcontracting that will result in layoffs. Adequate placement and retraining processes for displaced employees and workers whose restricted funds ("soft money") terminate.

Advancement -- A position classification system that encourages advancement for all employees and utilizes employees' expertise. A system of posting internal positions that promotes equal opportunity for all interested internal candidates, both within the department and campus-wide.

Over the next several months, we worked around this platform and met with most of the non-faculty/non-managerial staff in the university. In early March we held a rally attended by close to 200 people despite an unexpected blizzard. UE sisters and brothers from across the northeast joined us as did student representatives, members of the Burlington City Council, and Congressman Bernie Sanders. The general theme of this rally was workplace democracy. In April we continued the card drive begun in February and on April 30th, determined that we had a majority of members in the service and maintenance unit. UE filed a petition for election which was immediately challenged by the university on the basis that the grouping was an inappropriate unit -- the same challenge they used in opposing the unionization of police services. In July 1997, the police services unit beat the university administration's challenge at the Vermont Supreme Court and in October, the service and maintenance folks won their unit determination from the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB). Soon afterwards, the date of December 10th was agreed upon as the date for an election to be held. The university continued its questionably legal tactics -- meeting with employees, issuing veiled threats via its floor managers, sending out letters via campus mail on taxpayers' money trying to convince folks that they would solve their problems and that unions were foreign to the "UVM way". Despite this, the workers stood up and voted union. Now, with two units of the UVM workforce unionized, we move on to the clerical and technical staff. The struggle continues.

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From the Inside

Doing Christmas

Dan Pens

I participated in a discussion group last night, two weeks before Christmas. Twenty other prisoners attended the meeting. Each of us has been imprisoned for more than a decade. We meet weekly in a kind of support group. We're orphans in a sea of change in Washington's criminal justice system.

In 1981, Washington state passed the Sentencing Reform Act (SRA). The SRA mandated that persons convicted of crimes after July 1, 1984, be given a "determinate" sentence. Most of the state's current prison population of 13,000 are "SRA prisoners." They have a definite release date. Some of their sentences are lengthy. But nonetheless, they have a date on a calendar they can circle. They know when they'll be going home.

Several hundred prisoners, myself among them, are leftovers from the old sentencing system. We committed our crimes before July 1, 1984 and were given "indeterminate" sentences. Under the old system, judges handed out lengthy maximum terms -- ten, twenty, thirty years, or in many instances life. However, it was anticipated that with very few exceptions, prisoners would serve less than maximum sentences.

Rather, shortly after entering the prison system, each prisoner would be seen by the parole board and be given a minimum term. If a person had a twenty year maximum sentence, the parole board may have given them a five or ten year minimum term. This was the length of time one could expect to serve in prison. It was presumed that if you stayed out of trouble and participated in education or other self-improvement programs, when your minimum term was up you would be paroled.

When the SRA was enacted in 1984, a study was conducted by the legislative budget office to determine how many years the parole board would be needed. They calculated that if the board continued to follow its practice of paroling prisoners when their minimum terms expired, there would be so few "old guideline" prisoners left in the system by 1988, that the parole board should then be phased out of existence.

But, for whatever reasons, the parole board altered its practice of paroling most prisoners when their minimum term expired. Instead, the board conducted parole hearings wherein they added more years to prisoners' minimum term. "Come back and see us in a few more years," they'd say.

And so, when the legislature considered eliminating the parole board in 1988, they discovered that their earlier projections were wildly inaccurate. Instead of the fewer than 500 "old guideline" prisoners the 1984 legislative budget office predicted, there were more than 2,000 such prisoners left in the system. The law mandating the phase-out of the parole board was amended; they were extended until 1992.

And then again until 1998. And last year, the legislature extended the parole board's existence (and nearly $1 million annual budget) until the year 2008.

It is ridiculously easy to compare the sentences of old guideline and SRA prisoners and perceive unfairness. And the notion that there *should* be fairness is incredibly seductive. The story of my cellmate offers a compelling example:Tom (not his real name) was convicted in 1986 of sexually abusing his step daughter. Under the SRA sentencing guidelines, the judge gave Tom a "determinate" sentence of 41 months (3 years and 5 months). With time off for good behavior, Tom would have served 2 years and 3 months behind bars. A "fair" sentence? Perhaps not. But the SRA sentencing guidelines called for such a sentence. And so Tom was sent to prison, thinking he'd be out in just over two years.

The court then discovered an error. Some of the crimes Tom committed, it seems, occurred before July 1, 1984. Therefore, he should have been sentenced under the "old guideline" system. Tom was returned to court for resentencing. The judge gave him a minimum of 41 months and a maximum of life. And Tom was returned to prison to serve this new sentence.

When his 41 month minimum was over, the parole board gave him more time. Tom had chosen to not participate in the prison's sex offender treatment program. The parole board said he would not be paroled otherwise.

So Tom went to the treatment program. There he did well. The program's report was positive in tone and substance; Tom was declared a "moderate risk to reoffend."

With this report in hand, and having already served 130 months (10 years and 10 months), Tom saw the parole board again, honestly expecting to be paroled this time.

Instead, they extended his minimum term yet another 72 months (6 years). And there is no guarantee that Tom will be paroled in 72 months. In fact, he now believes that he could spend the rest of his life in prison.

So, if Tom had waited until after July 1, 1984 to commit his crimes, he would have served less than three years in prison. But because he committed some of his criminal behavior before that date, well. . . he will end up doing at least 16 years, and indeed may never be released.

Is this "fair"? Like I said before, the notion that sentences *should* be fair is quite compelling. And, yet, this notion -- this fallacy, if you will -- is also like a brick wall; the harder you pound your head against it, the more it hurts. After all, is life *anywhere* "fair"?

And though my own story is not as compelling as Tom's (for one thing, my crimes were much more serious than his), there are similarities. I was sentenced to a maximum term of 30 years in 1981. I saw the parole board in October, after having been imprisoned for 16 years and having completed the sex offender treatment program. I, too, hoped that I would be paroled. Instead, the parole board extended my minimum term to the year 2011; they declared that I would do the entire 30 years.

At the meeting last night, I looked around the room and saw the faces of 20 other men whose situation mirrors mine and Tom's. The discussion topic was Christmas: what does it mean to those of us serving lengthy "indeterminate" sentences, and how do we cope?

It's easy to feel sorry, to bang your head against the wall until dizzy with depression and hopelessness. This is one of the things we discussed. The first half-hour of the meeting was gloomy and maudlin.

But slowly, a transformation took place. We began to share stories of how we *can* celebrate Christmas. We talked about how Christmas is a time to share. How those more fortunate among us, who receive gift packages of edible treats, share with those who do not.

We talked about Christmases past and what made them special. A single thread ran through all of these stories. The memories were not of the gifts received, but of the spirit of giving that touched each of us at one time or another.

Each person took something different away from the meeting. But I think all of us walked away with the idea that our freedom is not entirely lost. We each have the freedom to choose how we experience this Christmas. We can bang our heads against the wall and despair over what we have lost. Or we can find ways to give, to share, to seek the Spirit of Christmas. And to celebrate.

For it is not the gift that matters, it is the spirit of giving. And it's not the time that matters, it's the spirit of living.

These truths hold true no matter where you "do your time", inside or outside of prison. And in that spirit -- the spirit of giving, the spirit of living -- I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Instead, they extended his minimum term yet another 72 months (6 years). And there is no guarantee that Tom will be paroled in 72 months. In fact, he now believes that he could spend the rest of his life in prison.

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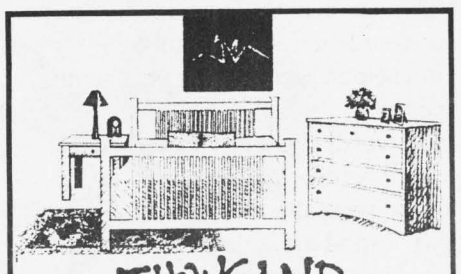
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"Thank You" From Books to Prisoners

Thanks to all who attended/worked on benefits in December and made them a success!! We raised enough to ship 12 boxes of packages to inmates who had been waiting since late July-early September. Now we are working on the rest of the '97 backlog. Your help is needed to fill orders, wrap packages, bring in books and stamps or money for stamps.

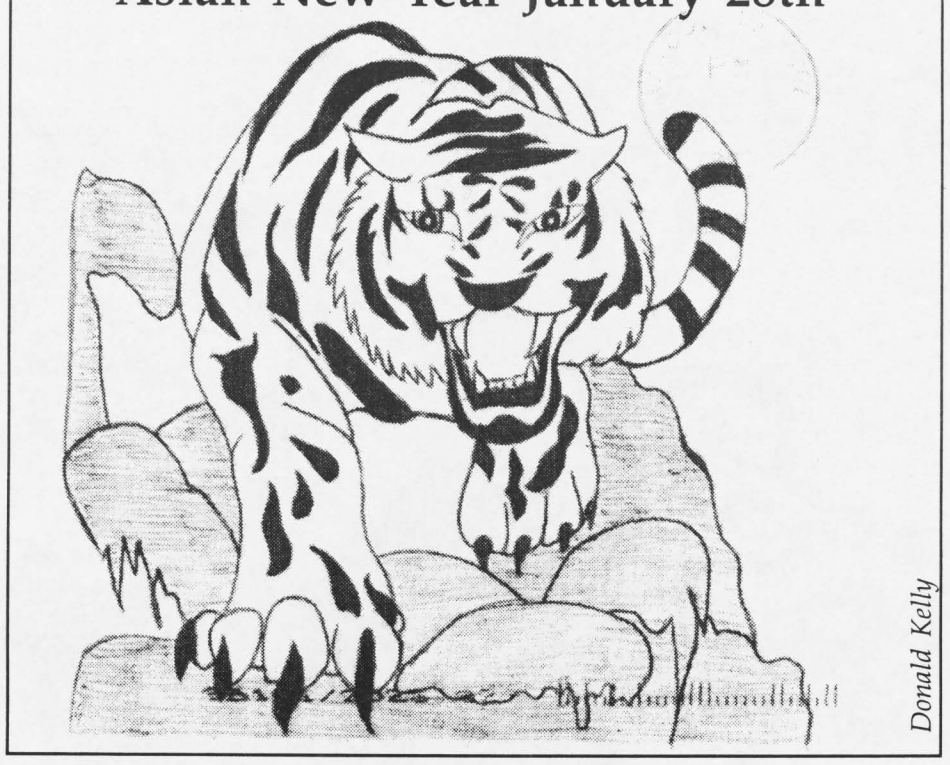
Special thanks to the bands who performed December 12th: Behead the Prophet, Stella, LLP, and Botch. Thank you to Artis the Spoonman, Leif Olson, EPIC and the Prison Action Committee who put on a great benefit at TESC December 13th. Thanks to Otto's and the Olympia Food Co-op for donating refreshments and to those who donated items for the successful raffle: Archibald Sisters, Childhoods End, poet/author Red Diamond, Earth Magic, Jo Mamas, Morerain the beading instructor at Rainsong, Pottery in Motion, and the Tea Lady.

W.I.P. seeks articles, artwork (black and white is best) from those in prison. Please send submissions to: Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia WA 98507-0295

Books to Prisoner January Events

- **Prison Videos** - Thurs. Jan 22, 7 pm at Liberation Cafe (above Bulldog News) - Inside look at US prisons, progressive prison reform projects and prison art.
- **B to P Volunteer Potluck** Sun Jan. 18, 3 pm at Liberation Cafe.
- **Open Work Session** every Thurs. 3-9 pm. Join us. Help needed answering letters and wrapping packages.
- Buy Food! Eat Hearty! Bring us all the grocery receipts you can from Bayview and Ralph's Thriftway (dated from July '97-March '98). B to P receives 1%, every penny helps! You can mail them to address below.
- Soup to Soap it all helps! Save the UPC code from Western Family producst, send them to B to P, 116 E 4th Ave. Olympia WA 98501

Asian New Year January 28th



Donald Kelly

Letter Reaffirms Need of Books on Black History, Culture and Philosophy

Ed. note: This letter from a Texas prison expresses the deep cultural and educational needs the Books to Prisoners project strives to meet. Your help volunteering to fill orders, donating books, and contributing to shipping costs is always needed.

Dear brother:

Many of us here do not have a deep understanding of our history as a Black people here in North America or abroad and we humbly request material in regards to black history, philosophy and general cultural facts about our past.

It has been a great concern for us, because having acquired quite a considerable amount of Western knowledge that has been completely devoid of the African-American touch, the system has subconsciously built into our minds certain biases that tend to hinder our intellectual, spiritual and moral growth!

Not only here, but in free society, we have been severely handicapped to respond adequately and effectively to inquiries about our history and unique contributions to America, because we do not understand the richness of our history as a black people.

We, therefore, need your assistance very badly and I sincerely believe God willing, you can help us a lot to strengthen our knowledge and respect in ourselves based on sound knowledge written by black historians.

This would adequately equip us God-willing to effectively spread the light of black accomplishments within our environment and even beyond to the outside community.

We will be particularly grateful if your kind response will include publications on Malcom X, Marcus Garvey, WEB Dubois, Booker T. Washington, Benjamin Banneker, Garrett Morgan, Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, and Martin Luther King.

We're anxiously awaiting your anticipated and favorable response.

Your brother in Peace and Love,
Jamal

Nammyoho Reage Kyo

I am the cause - efft sometimes
I don't want to be; my life goes
by without me knowing why?
Karma has a long arm - that's the
best hell man can have?
how long Nammyoo Reage Kyo...

light 3 x light thats what I want to be
part of hold, I wonder it all
I am Nammyoho Reage Kyo how can this be
for I am part of seven that forever will be,
only light will change Nammyoho Reage Kyo...

Santiago

PLN Matter Of Fact

- Between 1900 and 1980, 41 federal prisons were built.
- Between 1990 and 1995, 45 federal prisons were built. The state and federal prison population also increased 45 percent, from 773,919 to 1,125,979.
- In 1980, there were 24,353 federal prisoners; 33 percent (8,085) were minorities.
- In 1995, there were 100,432 fedeal prisoners and 64.7 percent (65,000) were minorities.
- As of February 1997, at least seven states (CA, IL, IN, MO, PA, RI and VA) have eliminated or severely curtailed access by the media to state prisons.
- 25 states contain 118 private prisons. Texas has 38 of them. (The state's prison population increases by 450 to 600 each month.)
- According to an article in Newsweek the value of Corrections Corporation of America stock has jumped "almost tenfold in the last three years.
- The Rand Corporation conducted a study on the effectiveness of different strategies for reducing U.S. cocaine consumption. Their results, released in May concluded that drug treatment is 7 times more cost-effective than domestic enforcement, 10 times more effective than interdiction, and 23 times more effective than trying to stop other countries from producing drugs. Source: Prison Legal News

Your Help Is Needed

Because of the huge number of letters Books for Prisoners-Olympia Support Group receives each month and its limited resources, requests often wait many months to be filled. Thousands of letters still remain in boxes. Your help and generousity are urgently needed.

If we desire individuals in this country's prisons to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic, then we too need to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic. We need to "walk the talk." Please donate you time, money or books.

In greatest demand are:

English, Spanish/English, Southeast Asian dictionaries, thesaurus, new almanacs, and GED books.

Frequently requested are:

African-American, Chicano/Latino, and Native American history and progressive U.S. history.

Please donate:

- Any other good books
- Stamps and stamp money
- Money for tape, wrapping paper, copying

Please bring donations of books to the Books to Prisoner-Olympia office at the Liberation Cafe above Bulldog News.

Please make checks payable to Liberation Cafe c/o Books to Prisoners

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Inmates — All correspondence to Books to Prisoners *must* go through the main branch:
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A Fact Sheet On Prison And Aids

- As of November 1992, a cumulative total of 11,565 AIDS cases had been reported among inmates in US federal, state, and larger city/county correctional systems.
- Based on this estimate, at least 4.6% of AIDS cases in the United States through 1993 were among inmates.
- Between 1990 and 1992, the rate of increase of AIDS in prison populations was 66%.
- By 1994, in state/federal systems, the aggregate AIDS incidence rate was 518 cases per 100,000, up from 362 per 100,000 in 1992. In 1994, 47 state and federal prison systems reported 4,827 current cases of AIDS.
- The number of prison deaths from AIDS is growing from 325 in 1985 to 4,588 at the end of 1994. AIDS is the leading cause of death among inmates in many correctional facilities in the United States.
- AIDS incidence rates are significantly higher among correctional inmates than in the total population, due to the high concentration in correctional populations of persons with risk factors for HIV.
- The vast majority of inmate AIDS deaths and current AIDS cases occur among men, accounting for 96% of cumulative AIDS deaths and 91% of current inmate AIDS cases in 1994. However, because HIV infection rates are higher now in women, an increase in AIDS cases among women can be expected.
- Although rates of HIV infection are not high among adolescent inmates currently, rates of sexually transmitted diseases are high in this group, suggesting that these adolescents are at risk for HIV infection.

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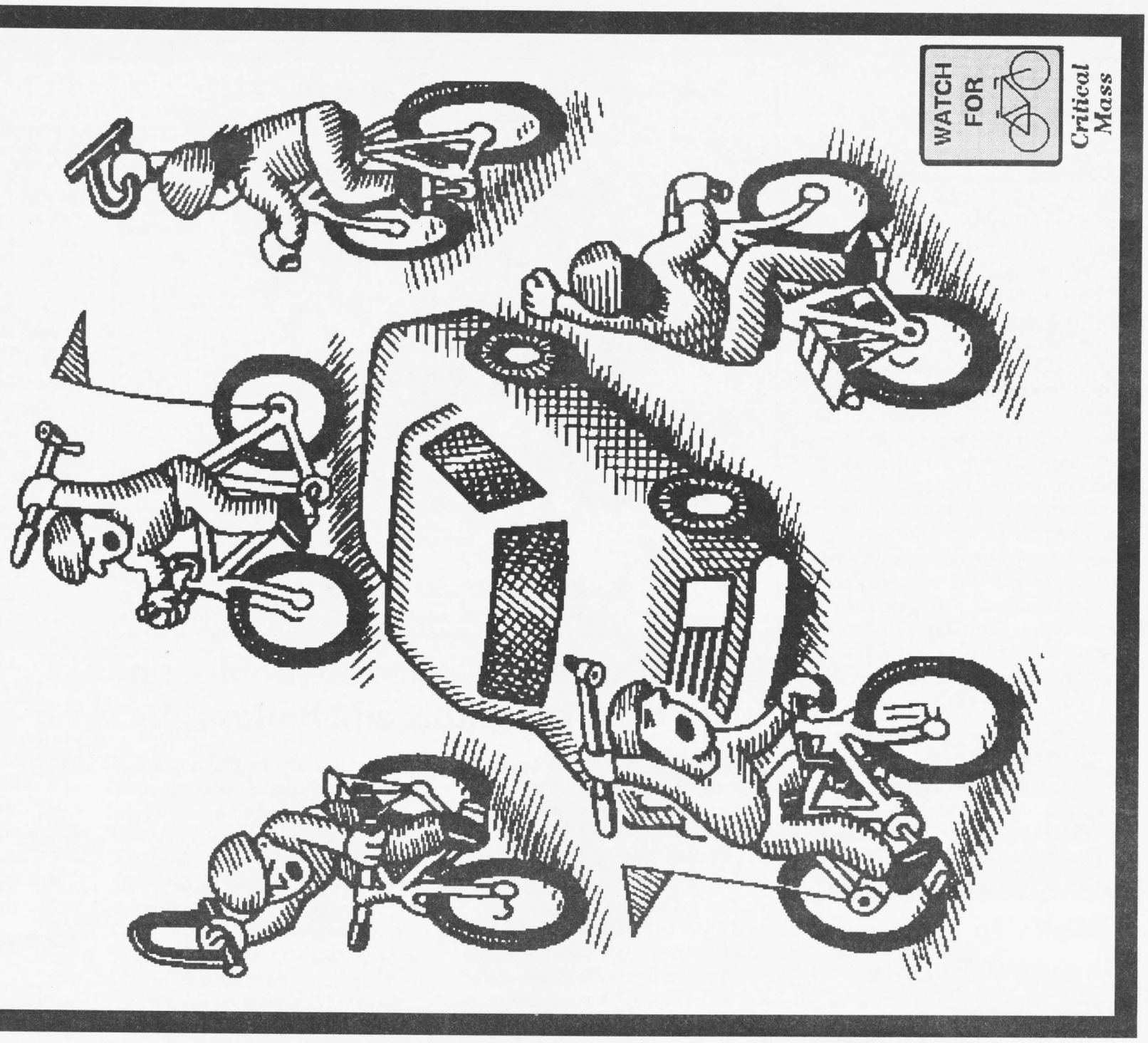

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Offensive-AD

(SEND US THE ONES YOU HATE)

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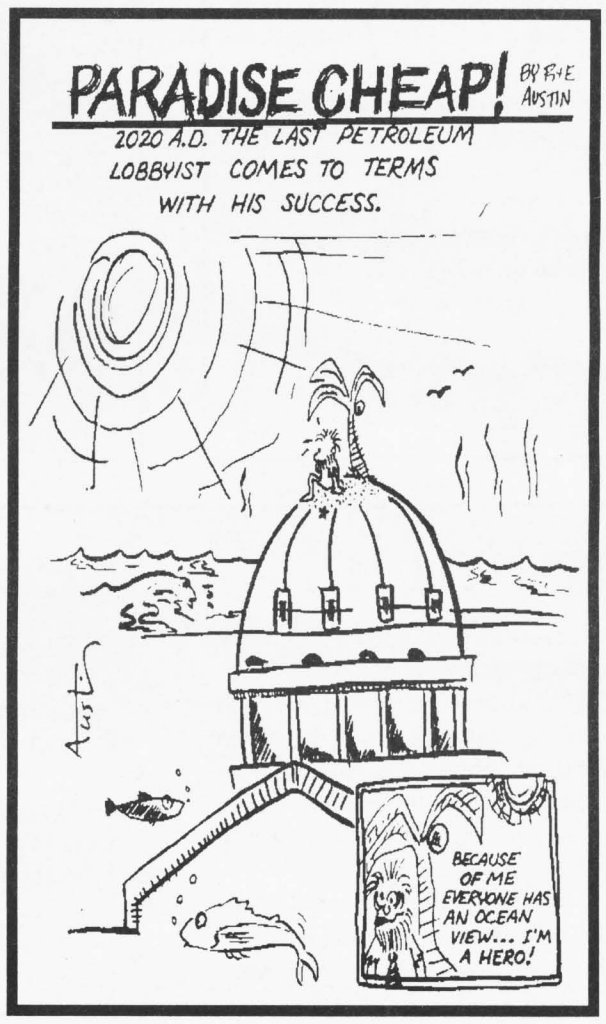
Offensive-AD

What a splendid eye-catching gimmick. Don't you think? Actual storefront in Portland, OR.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